



5 February 2015 – "Any attempt at sealing borders – as the nationalist populist discourse stridently calls for – will continue to fail on a massive scale", United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, said during today's press conference in Brussels. "Migrants will continue arriving despite all efforts to stop them, at a terrible cost in lives and suffering if nothing else is put in place."

Migrants and asylum seekers move due to the push factors in their countries of origin (including war, conflict, or extreme poverty), and pull factors such as the unrecognised needs in the labour markets of the EU Member States. According to the independent expert, these push and pull factors are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Nations should therefore rethink a framework that's mainly based on securing borders.

"Smuggling only exists because borders have been drawn up", the expert said, comparing today's situation to the migration within Europe fifty or sixty years ago.

"But today we are banking on the mobility within the EU. We are happy that young Spanish people who can't find work in Spain, find a job in London. So why don't we do the same for migrants?"

EU must recognize real labour needs

In addition, Mr Crépeau called on Europe not "to turn a blind eye to the pull factors for irregular migration", such as the unrecognized needs for migrant workers in European underground markets.

"EU Member States should recognize their real labour needs, including for low-wage work. This means that they should, on the one hand, open up many more regular migration channels, at all skills levels. On the other hand, they need to repress unscrupulous employers who exploit the fear of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants to be detected, detained, and deported", the expert underlined.

Refugee Settlement Programme

To avoid asylum seekers having to take to dangerous routes, European States, in partnership with other Global North States, should implement a refugee settlement programme, over a number of years, with a distribution key for attributing responsibilities.

"Combining such policies would lead to smaller underground labour markets, less irregular border crossings, less labour exploitation, and less migrants' rights violations."

Mr Crépeau concluded his speech by stressing that "a common narrative celebrating mobility and diversity, recognising real labour market needs as well as the needs of migrants, based on human rights guarantees and access to justice, must be developed."

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